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Division of Labor and the Economic Determinants of Divorce

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DIVISION OF LABOR AND THE ECONOMIC DETERMINANTS OF DIVORCE

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The theme of the 1992 National Republican Convention rang out with such phrases as the "traditional family" and "family values," and many conservatives asserted that a return to these molds of the established institutions of marriage and family would be the solution to the societal ills America now faces. Using Gary S. Becker's neo-classical theory on the family, this study researches the economic causes of divorce and hypothesizes that, from an economic standpoint, the "traditional family" is more likely to remain intact than a household with a non-traditional family structure. A sample of married couples were drawn from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY), and logistic regressions and descriptive statistics were utilized to measure and explore the economic variables affecting the dissolution of marriages in terms of Becker's theory. Although support was not found for Becker's theory, several economic determinants of divorce were revealed.